

Poems

by

Owen Innsly,
and others

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Part I.

The Poems of Owen Innsly

DEDICATION

Moves thou perchance in strange and starry spheres,
afar beyond the impenetrable night that shrouds the
tomb, smiling at the old fears of death, encircled by
all-conquering light?

Or does thou sleep where thy last bed was made,
beneath the violets and the scented grass, careless
alike of sunshine and of shade, of morns that
linger and of eves that pass?

Ah, who shall say? No eye can pierce the dark,
no strained ear tidings catch of weal or woe out
of silence, and no single spark illumines that portal
through which all must go.

Yet this we know. Death is a kind of birth and brings
one sacred immortality. Thou lives in thy traces left
on earth, thou lives in thy children's memory.

And one of these, binding the varied flowers with
tinted petals and with shining leaves, fallen on his
path in sad and happy hours,

as one might bind the ripened corn in sheaves.
Dear blossoms of the heart and brain such sprays
and blooms as wither not, but nod and wave forever.
The completed garland lays with loving hands
upon thy quiet grave.

WAITING

I count the days, the lonely days,
the weary days. From east to west they softly
go, silent and slow.

Green is the earth
with budding grass, the wondrous birth
of spring and hope, wide
as it spreads new glory sheds.

The air is sweet. Here snowy petals
strew the street, here lean against the
garden-wall the lilacs tall.

The cuckoo cries
and in his frequent note there lies
the count of years where
brain and nerve must toil and serve.

But youth is strong, and unappalled
it fronts the long array of days which
must be fair if thou art there.

When I may learn
my will to thine to bend and turn, to meet
thy mood and more and more love and adore.

The world is dear and
good. I dare not shed a tear.
I sing my songs of love and praise,
and count the days.

AN EVENING RIDE

We ride and ride. High on the hills
the fir-trees stretch into the sky. The
birches which the deep calm stills, quiver
again as we speed by.

Beside the road a shallow stream
goes leaping over its rocky bed. Here
lies the corn-fields with a gleam
of daisies white and poppies red.

A faint star trembles in the west.
A fire-fly sparkles, fluttering bright against
the mountain's sombre breast,
and yonder shines a village light.

Oh could I creep into thine arms
beloved and upon thy face read the
arrest of dire alarms that press me close
and from thy embrace we view
the sweet earth as we ride.

Alas, how vain our longings are!
Already night is spreading wide
her sable wing, and thou art fair.

A ROSARY

Like pearls that form a rosary, so lie
in shining rows for me strung on a golden
thread of time,

the precious hours I know with thee.

And filled with love and praise
of thee, as one who tells his rosary,

I count upon the beads of time
the benisons thou brings me.

Oh may such hours still
dawn for me! So rich in love, so filled with
thee, and glisten on the robe of time

a never-ending rosary.

SHADOWS

She leaned from out the mystic space of
Shadow-Land. As on the wall the shapes the firelight
casts, her face flickered and faded. That was all.

Like phantoms starting on the wold, when dusk
defeats the clear-eyed day, her form rose, but when arms
would hold and clasp it vanished quite away.

Now we are shadows both. Above the grave
of hoped-for future bliss two pale wraiths stand.

Oh sister, love! Reach me thy lips.

Can shadows kiss?

DEPARTURE

The hours go on. Up from the
leaden-coloured sea the autumn wind sweeps
chillingly, and she is gone.

Like tears that drain
the heart until its springs are dry,
so drains the sources of the sky
the falling rain.

The white ships sail like ghosts
toward some mysterious tryst hastening,
and vanish in the mist,

silent and pale. From clasping hands
and clinging lips, from love and
care of dear ones left, they dear ones
bear to unknown lands.

The circling shore lies lonely.
The receding wave moans like that whisper
from the grave heard evermore
by widowed hearts.

“Unfettered by the
bonds of years, and deaf to prayer,
untouched by tears, each one departs.”

Oh love, oh grief! Your mingled
notes I singing wake, with trust that song
for her dear sake may bring relief.

IMPATIENCE

I see the ships go sailing, sailing.
My feet are fettered to the shore.
Their prows with many a voyage are hoar.
See on the far horizon paling
they sink and are no more.

I see the birds go flying, flying,
in swaying line and whirling ring,
'twixt blue and blue their way they wing.
But those swift flocks through ether
plying to me no message brings.

I see the moon go riding
through the heavenly paths on golden
wheels, her passing kiss the ocean
feels, but in his bosom
swiftly hiding his joy,
no word reveals.

Oh golden moon and snowy pinions
of birds that fly and ships that mate
their speed with birds, in royal state sweep proudly
through your wide dominions! And I, I only wait.

THINE EYES

In other days beloved, when the world
has stepped between us and thou seems far off,
when half effaced my memory by mists of
sweeter incense round thee curled than I can offer,

when like dead leaves whirled before a storm
my glad dreams break and flee, before relentless fate's
reality, when youth and joy their golden wings have furled.

Even then oh love I shall not quite despair. Even
then upon my sore and weary heart a gentle after-sunset
glow will rise and comfort me. Some moments will be
fair, and looking back I still shall smile once more,
remembering the old kindness of thine eyes.

WHO PROFITS?

Wherefore the vigils and the tears,
the flight of dreams when night appears,
the short repose, the long unrest,
 the wearied throbings of the breast,
the utter impotence of will, the shifting
of the pillow till a dull beam strikes
 the window-pane and daylight
 struggles in again?

Were it indeed for her dear sake
if she might slumber while I wake, if for
my tossings to and fro, her limbs
profounder rest might know, but sleep,
because it shuns my eyes
on hers no whit the gentler lies
and all the tears that
I can shed bring no new blessing to her bed.

Oh love how overbold art thou!
I am thy slave. My heart I bow. But one
grace I demand of thee, torture not unavailingly.
Let mercy guide,
do not keep chained in thy toils
the swift-winged sleep. Give me, too ceaselessly
oppressed, a little while, a little rest.

THE BETTER PART

Because in love, *my love*, there
are two parts to choose, the near, the far,
the humble moth, the glittering star.

Since one is vassal, one is lord, one
the adorer, one the adored, one speaks,
and one obeys the word.

Since one must watch and ever
keep a faithful guard that one may sleep,
since one must sow, and one

must reap. Since one must
wear, and one adorn, one pluck the rose
and one the thorn, one know
the night, and one the morn.

Since one must give, and one
must take, one yield his heart for one to
break, content even thus for love's dear sake.

I, dearest, choose the better part.
I choose the sorrow and the smart, the full
surrender of the heart. I choose
the better part today, forever,
which no fate can sway,
and nought but death can take away.

COMPENSATION

Since heaven has given me
to wear the crown of love august and
fair, is it not fitting that I should bear
its cross as well, without despair?

Since I may sow the precious
seed and cull its flowers to fill my need,
is it a fatal thing indeed if from their
thorns my hands must bleed?

Since I may drink the draught
divine down to the dregs, if sometimes
brine be mingled with the glowing wine,
shall I shall murmur or repine?

Oh thou who whatsoever thou art,
thou great and universal heart, *thou soul*
of love since pain and smart form
of thy perfect whole a part,
my destined portion let me take,

while at thy boundless streams
I slake my thirst and gather strength
to make a joy of sorrows, for love's sake.

LAURELS

I would cull laurels,
but not for pride or fame.
When grave shades fall on him
 that lies low, all honour
shrivels to an empty name.
Alike are praise and blame,
 sunshine and snow.

But I would pluck
the rarest flowers that spring
from mortal effort, gems
 that deepest sleep
in human possibility to fling low
at thy feet the
gorgeous glittering heap,

that endless splendours
might thy name surround,
that men beholding
 thine imperial mien.

And the rich jewels
wherewith thou were crowned
might cry with awed rapt voice,
 “Behold thy queen!” That
thou so greeted might grow
proud the while, and know love’s
 work and bless me with a smile.

LIGHTHOUSES

When pales the sunset
flush along the sky, when the sea's
azure deepens into gray,
the lighthouse lamps flash out
 across the bay,
their cheerful beams proclaiming

“This way lie perils,
and that way safety. You who roam,
searching for foreign shores
 with caution steer and you
returning, *lo*, the land is near
 and yonder waits the harbor
 which is home.”

Such is thy part.
Thou art my beacon-light
standing the open passage
 to disclose, against unsafe
and treacherous ways to warn.

Never did a dark
and stormy night obscure my
path but that bright flame arose
 and shone with steadfast
 radiance till the morn.

HELENA'S SONG

Between the olives and the pines
the vineyards slope to meet the shore.
The sun in skies unsullied shines
till evening lends a charm for more.

The fragrant breath
of orange-flowers perfumes
the sleepy summer air, and
all the slow-revolving hours a garb
of pomp and beauty wear.

What were it all oh love my
love! But that with thee its joy I know?
Thou art my dazzling heaven above,
and thou my fertile field below.

Thou art my wave-encircled
land and thou alone my central sea.
My spirit leaps at thy command
to drown, and lose itself in thee.

BURNT SHIPS

Upon the hopeless desert
of her love I landed, lured by
glamours on her face. And,
scarce on shore, a desolate
strange place I said, but

surely some green cedar
grove awaits me, proffering
its cooling shade, and in its depths
melodious fountains spring.

So tear the canvas from
the masts and bring planks,
beams and spars until the pile is laid.

Then with my mad hands

I lit the fire, and watched with
fevered eyes the dark mass burn,
so blotting out the prospect of return.

But daily cools the pulse of my
desire and bitter is the redness of her lips.
Oh god of love why did I burn my ships!?

GIFTS OF THE GODS

The gods bestow on men wisdom
and art to stir with noble counsel
and brave deed the flagging pulses
 of a fellow-heart,
 and minister to need.

To pierce the subtle secrets
of the globe, to read the records of lands
and seas and stars that seam
 the midnight's sable
 robe, great nature's mysteries.

And that all love the breasts
of all may reach and into new exalted
regions lift, they spend the power
 of soul-compelling
 speech, and song's diviner gift.

From me they veiled their higher
knowledge, hid the paths of light
and calm that lie above the common round.

My feeble lisplings chid,
but taught me how to love.

BEYOND DEATH

Suppose the dreaded messenger
of death should hasten steps
that seem though sure so slow,
and soon should whisper with his
chilly breath, "Arise, thine hour
has sounded, thou
must go, for they that earliest
taste life's holiest feast must early
fast, lest grown too bold, they
dare seize the share of them that follow."

Then though my pulse's beat
forever ceased, if where I slumbered
thou should chance to pass,
though grave-bound I thy
presence should discern.
Heedless of coffin-lid
and tangled grass, upward to kiss thy feet
my lips would yearn. And did
one spark of love thy heart
inflame, with the old rapture
I should call thy name.

MORTALITY

If thou should die beloved,
(fatal thought that curdles all the
blood along my veins,) and with
foul poisonous vapour stains
thy glad day's beauty,

though with anguish fraught
our parting, I would be near, so
that nought might miss me
of the swift and torturing
pains such loss would nourish.
For my soul despairs
a peace of ignorance
or oblivion bought.

And, my love, I would
not be first to go lest thy dear eyes
might drop a single tear,
remembering one who
worshiped them so well,
or lest some sudden pang
thy breast might know, when
half forgetting thou
should chance to hear
some careless voice
my name and story tell.

JEWELS

Kings have a royal custom that I love.
In common times bringing the priceless gems
that on high days crown their diadems,
each stone setting the name above,
as this is such a pearl, a diamonds this.

They spread them where the general
eye may see and grow to brilliance in their
brilliancy. I too have jewels, jewels of
pure bliss brighter than pearls and
diamonds and more rare, of song, speech

and silence, presence and absence.
Turn which way you will their deathless
splendours burn. So by my mood men
guess which one I wear and in my
gladness see the others shine, for I am
faint with joy to know them mine.

LOVE'S CUSTOM

In years to come I ask thee not to say
"I loved him once. Once I held him dear."
Ah no, long since I put that hope away
and buried it in smiles without a tear!

But say "Mid all who worshiped
at my feet exalting me, 'mid all who loved
me best as I remember now, I there beat
no heart more fondly in a single breast,
no eyes that brightened quicker when

I came, no hand that lay more longingly
in mine, no voice that knew a tenderer tone
to name my name than his whose love
seemed half divine."

If this thou say, though I be dead the while,
your words will reach me, I shall hear and smile.

ONE WAY OF LOVE

To love thee sweet is as if one should love
a marble statue of perfected form, which on the spot
that hot lips lie above, a tiny spot grows
for an instant warm. The moment passed,

straightway it is cold again, returning to its
first proud lifeless grace, keeping no memory of
that close embrace, nor from the warm
red lips one scarlet stain.

But what of that? Why should I be
distressed though thou art cold as stone? Let
me be brave if but for once and love
for nothing save
love's sake only.

For he loves best and brightest does
his flame of passion burn, who gives all things,
asking no return.

MY QUEEN

He has been queen too long
whom I adore. Mistress of men and
moulder of their will. For
homage such as mine to reach
the core of her proud heart, or teach
it one new thrill.

Yet I have heard that royal
rulers know such greed for power,
that for some strip of land,
some province stored with
vineyards or long rows of waving corn
and grain they throw
like rubbish honour,
wealth and fame, and as were
water spill the blood of men.

If this be so, to increase thy sway
by one poor heart's extent thou 'rt fain.
Oh then stretch out thy hand to me,
and with a mien of graciousness
look on me, oh my queen!

DEPENDENCE

What would life keep for me
if thou should go?

Beloved give me answer,
for my art is pledged unto
thy service and my heart
apart from thee joy
nor grace can know.

No arid desert, no wide
waste of snow looks
drearier to exiled ones
who start on their forced
journey, than should thou
depart this fair green earth
to my dead hope would show.

And like a drowning man
who struggling clings with
stiffened fingers
to the rope that saves
thrown out to meet his deep need
from the land, so to thy
thought I hold when sorrow's
wings darken the sky
and 'mid the bitterest waves of fate
am succored by thy friendly hand.

SUBMISSION

God forbid that I should complain
however hard and heavy be the cross
thou bid me carry, since to me all loss
incurred turns straightway to gain,
and by this side of thine inflicted pain
all pleasure won from others
is dross beside pure gold.

Like summer winds tossing
the branches of trees whose trunks
remain unmoved, so sweep the floods
of circumstance ruffling along
the current of my mood while my
soul's deep repose they cannot shake.

But at a word of thine before thy
glance my spirit bows, knowing thy will
is good, eager to do or suffer for thy sake.

LOVE'S CALENDAR

I take no heed of month
or week or day, or times and seasons
of the year. Springtime is with me
when she is near, and winter
when clouds of absence stray
across my heaven, holding
its sun at bay.

The morning dawns when
her dear eyes appear, and night shuts
down upon me blank and drear,
when those consoling
orbs are taken away.

As earth is gladdened
when the snows depart, when
woods and meadows are
no longer bare, but tender blossoms
nestle in the grass, so
when my love approaches
to my heart her balmy breath brings
floods of summer air, and fresh flowers
spring wherever her footsteps pass.

ISLANDS

“Some unsuspected isle
in far-off seas.” Browning.

Beyond the seacoast where the
level sea stretches its shining length
some isle must rest, cradled
upon the ocean’s bounteous
breast where men might live
untrammeled, glad and free.

Out of life’s babbling current
there must be some unsuspected
isle, love’s dear bequest
to those who follow him, where
safe and blest, Oh my beloved,
I might dwell with thee.

But ships are not found
strong enough to bear
adventurers over every ocean’s
foam. Not all my thought
nor love and care can build
the bark in which we two might
roam. So still my voice assails
the unheeding air, with vain
lamentings for that island home.

SNOW-DROPS

Already once I've brought
you snow-drops dear, from an old
garden whose forgotten grace
seemed to revive again a little
space to do you honour.

Though March winds blow
drear and chill, yet with sweet
sense that spring is near these
brave and hardy buds the snow
displace, showing each

one a white and shining
face, the earliest flowers
of the awakening year.

So like the snow-drops once
for me there grew, amid the
snows of life pure blossoms,
when your smile first rested
on me, and I knew
my springtime was at hand.
Today again the flowers
of spring and love I bring to you, with
heart unchanged and faithful now as then.

LOVE'S ABODE

Up the white steps that led
to love's abode I hastened, tarrying
by the golden gate.

"Rulers of gods and men," I cried,
"I wait to pay my homage
here where most its owed!"

Then the bright gate swung
open and bestowed an entrance,
as love's servants

in sweet state came out
to meet and welcome me.
Elated and proud I followed
the way they showed.

They led me to the temple door,
where gleamed soft lights, and
sweet scents floated upon the air.

"Here wait our master's voice,"
they said, and then, they left me. Oh
when shall I be called into
the inner sanctuary, where amid
his chosen ones love reigns supreme?

STORM AND CALM, WHILE
LISTENING TO ST. SAEN'S

The waves of love will dash me
on a shore trackless and waste, where
there is no return. My mast is split,
my rudder gone, they burn like
glowing coals, these icy waves
that pour across my shattered deck.

The mad winds tore long since
my sails in shreds. The black heavens
yearn to clasp the deep. No star can
I discern that might direct me
till the storm were over. So rose
the cry of one in agony, tossed

on wide floods of passion,
doubt and dread. Then as a clear
morn smiles upon the sea when a wild
night has spread its wings and fled,
so thy sweet eyes arose
and shone on me, and peace
and calm upon my soul were shed.

SERVING

That thou aren't yet all mine
why should I care? Why grieve because
the draught is scant and thin which

thy love offers for my tasting in
its fragile cup, at moments short and rare?

Fool should I be thus early to
despair! The labours of my love but
now begin. Twice seven long years

Jacob served to win Rachel,
and dwell with her long days and fair.

So I will serve for thee from
land to land, gleaning and gathering
until twice seven years, and more
if need be, on their path shall roll,

with fond assurance that we
two shall stand at last together,
'mid the blessed spheres of love's
domain, united soul to soul.

THE BURDEN OF LOVE

I bear an unseen burden constantly.
Waking or sleeping I can never thrust
the load aside. Through summer's
heat and dust and winter's snows
it still abides with me.

I cannot let it fall though I should
be never so weary, for carry it I must.
Nor can the bands that bind it to me rust
or break, I shall never be set free.

Sometimes it is heavy as the weight
that Atlas bore on giant shoulders;
sometimes light as the frail message
of the carrier dove. But light or heavy,
it shifts never more. What is it
this oppression, day and night?
The burden, dearest, of a mighty love.

A SIMILE

At sea, far parted from the
happy shore the solitary rock
lies unmoved by caressing waves,
though unreproved their constant
kisses on its breast they pour.
So it stands witnessed
by all human lore.

Wherever the wanton god
of love has roved his shafts fell
never equal; one beloved, one lover
there must be for evermore.

Dear, if thou wilt be thou
that rock at sea, but let me be
the waves that never leave
their yearning through the ocean
space. And if be thou beloved
then let me be the fond
lover destined to receive and
hold thee in love's infinite embrace.

BLOSSOMS OF LOVE

The blossoms of my love
are many-hued and manifold.
Some glow like tongues of fire
 with those hot dyes of
 passion-fueled desire.
Some are white as snow and
heavy-dewed with fallen tears.

With modesty imbued
some bow their heads. Others
 purple-robed aspire to
flaunt before the world their
proud attire, and some soberer
 tinted blush in solitude.

All these varied blooms
I watch, tend and guard with
constant care, untiringly, that
 to them new grace and
beauty may possess. And many
a busy day and night I spend
 in weaving of their wealth
 a crown for thee. Beloved,
wilt thou wear it? Answer yes.

DEPRECATION
(Estrella to Alfronso.)

A pallid nun behind the
iron bars of fate I sit and watch
the roses blow that are for
others with wan smiles.
And so I hear thy song
sweep past me to the stars.

Like haughty conquerors
in triumphal cars thy mad hopes
ride within thy breast, and go
dauntlessly into realms I do
not know. My pale peace thy
passion breaks and mars.

Oh friend cease therefore
thy wild minstrelsy! No responsive
chord vibrates in my breast,
and its dead ashes stir
not at thy call. Then for
thy love's sake thou loves
me, silence the voice I may
not answer, lest striving to
flee from it, I faint and fall.

NEPENTHE

Unto Telemachus, who sought
at Menalaus' court tidings of great
Odysseus, tarrying year on
year the fair-armed Helen sweet
refreshment for him brought,
nepenthe, eastern juice.

Such charm it wrought that
who so tasted it could shed no
tear a whole day long
though all he held most
dear were struck with death,
he knew and suffered naught.

So thou, a later Helen brings
me a draught wherein oblivion and repose
in cunning portions are together
blent. I drink, my tears are
dry, my soul can see no ill, and even
sorrow's memory grows forgotten
in a nameless, deep content.

IN PROSPERITY

A wise and famous nation
held belief whoever in prosperity
overgrew the bounds of
temperate good, him would pursue
the ever-jealous gods with loss
and grief.

Sometimes so golden is
my harvest's sheaf, my way so
flowery, my heaven so blue,
I tremble lest the immortals brew
a storm to prove my fortune's
sudden thief.

But thou are my preserver
even here, and earn my mercy
from the envious skies, since
lacking thee I lack the one thing dear,
which were life's only first and
fairest prize.
For other joys are barren all and drear
beside that one which a stern fate denies.

IN A LETTER

There came a breath out of a distant time, an odour from neglected gardens where unnumbered roses once perfumed the air through summer days, in childhood's happy clime.

There came the salt scent of the sea, the chime of waves against the beaches or the bare, gaunt rocks, as to the mind half unaware recur the words of some familiar rhyme.

And as above the gardens and the sea the moon arises, and her silver light touches the landscape with a deeper grace, so over the misty wraiths of memory, turning them into pictures clear and bright, rose in a halo the beloved face.

TITLES

Sovereigns have no names but those
bestowed in baptism, Constance and Phillip,
so each age knows them and deals
of praise or blame their wage as harvests
of good fame or ill they sowed.

So with the mighty over whose cradle
glowed the star of genius, with that heritage
Dante and Raphael shine on history's
page simple as when they walked
our common road.

Like thy great namesake, in whose
cause the plain of Troy was strewn with
corpses while above Olympus heard the
wrathful gods contend, so 'mid the homage
of respect and love laid at thy feet by lover
and by friend, Helen thou art,
and Helen must remain.

AFTER ABSENCE

After long years of absence
had gone by he stood again upon the
parent shore of stern New England,
 his heart sore, his dulled
 bosom rent with sighs.

He mourned the vanished gods,
the radiant sky, the dear land of love
and song and lore. He mourned
 the sweet companionships
of yore, that on his path like scattered
 pearls did lie.

But when she passed as in
the former days, with the old halo
on her golden hair, with her
 old kindness and enchanting
ways it was as if some swift wind had
cleared the air. Before her smile
he stood transfixed there. He had
forgotten that she was so fair.

BONDAGE

"And this is freedom," cried the serf,
"at last I tread free soil, free air blows on me!"
and, wild to learn the sweets of liberty,
with eager hope his bosom bounded fast.

But not for naught had the long years
amassed habit of slavery. Among the free he
still was servile. Disheartened he crept
back to the old bondage of the past.

Long did I bear a hard and heavy
chain wreathed with amaranth and asphodel,
but through the flower-breaths stole the
weary pain. I cast it off and fled but

it was in vain; for when once more
I passed by where it fell, I took it up
and bound it on again.

WITCH-HAZEL

It is said that 'mid the sylvan shrubs
that grow one has a wizard power above
the rest. Held over the soil it points
its leafy crest to where the hidden
sources sleep below.

How must the gentle earth rejoice
when flow the pent-up streams and ease
the aching breast, grown sore with
guarding them, and ah how blest
those springs to men who
need of water know.

Beloved at thy touch the entire bliss
of being floods me. In my heart straight-way
songs rise and gush and murmur
without end. And dear who knows
but that some day, some one may
be a little glad for this that thou hast wrought,
and bless thee through my friend?

CALM

Here let us rest within "the zone of calms,"
found now at last, whose delicate mysteries
escaped us on the old tempestuous seas,
through *their* best gifts
this charmed space embalms.

Here are soft shadows as of darkling
palms whose branches faintly rustle in the
breeze of summer morns,

and gentle melodies as
of hushed voices chanting low sweet psalms.

The tyrant Time, plying his ceaseless
oar, will bear us farther all too soon,
eastward and westward, parted as

before. But while we linger yet,
each opposite shore still indistinct, take
speech oh love once more, and bless
the rapturous stillness as we go.

FANTASTIC SYMPHONY

We heard the symphony wherein
the mad poet fancies his love a sweet,
ever-recurring melody, piquing to pleasure,
ministering to pain.

Now ballrooms echo it, now wood
and plain take up the burden. Joyous
now it sounds, now sad and fraught
with mystery. All life
interwoven with that strait thou art the melody
of all my days,

I but an accidental note in thine,
its value unobserved by alien ears. Remove it,
still thy music is as fine,
but take thee from me
and the void displays discord
and inharmonious fall of tears.

THE SAME CANNOT BE OTHERWISE

Say not the charm is broken,
that the old rapture has faded
to a cool content, that flowers
so sweet at morn *must* lose
their scent when toward life's
noon experience has rolled.

No whisper that the tale
so often told fails in some measure
of its blandishment, nor that
the chord jangles wherein
were blent all harmonies
that music's voices hold.

Ah dear, a shining isle forever
lies beyond the track of ships,
upon the still sea where chains
are hid in wooing, soft disguise.
More blest than freedom
seems captivity, for the old
Circe looks from out thine eyes, and
thy Odysseus does not wish to flee.

FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE

Friendship sat smiling on a flowery height, watching blooming groves and meadows green, the peaceful stream that flowed through fields between.

“How rich my realm,” she breathed,
“how glad, how bright!”

But on a sudden fell a purple light, deepening the tranquil beauty of the scene, tingling with amethyst hue the river’s sheen, as love drew near in majesty and might.

“This is my kingdom, sister!”
quick he cried.

“My paths are not all stormy. There is calm upon my mountains and clear skies above. This radiant land thou views bears *my* balm, profounder far than thine.”

Then friendship sighed, but rose, and yielded up her seat to love.

THE TROUBADOUR

Thou Troubadour, roaming from
land to land, singing indeed, we grant
one endless theme, thy lady's praise, and
striving to redeem the pledges
laid on thee by love's command.

But we are the truer lovers, we who
stand beside our mistress, though no
silver stream of song escape our lips.

Thou art the dream, we the realities
her eyes have scanned.

"Know you," he answered, "how those
lilies grow that on the lake's breast seem
to float apart and free, though firmly
fastened their roots below?
Thus do I seem before the wind and
tide of chance and change, to sway
from side to side, but still my heart
is anchored to her heart."

THE GREEK YOUTH

“He goes,” she said, “there,
at the opening door, I see a shimmer
as of snow wings. It’s his white
robe that as he passes flings
its shining undulation over the floor.”

But while she spoke, his fond
arms as before held her, his kiss
burned on her lips as sings some
woodland bird, his voice’s
murmurings thrilled with the joyous
weight of love he bore.

It was the moonlight of
thine own sad eyes that cast my
shadow, in thy silver sphere,
half dusk, half light, ghosts
start at any breath. I bring the
sunshine. In it no surprise can
come, no shade can walk. Lo, I am here,
beloved, and shall be here unto death.

WANDERER'S LIFE

He has no home, owns no fatherland.
His country is the hospitable earth. He
 shapes his course where past fields
the planet's greenest groves of plenty stand.

But however golden be the strand he
treads, clearer than the sound of mirth and
 laughter steals the voice that still to his
best joy gives birth, more potent than command.

Again his ship he steers into one harbor,
hastening to the saint before whose shrine his
 constant offering glows. He heaps his
treasure, won with blood and tears, there at her feet;

praying without complaint, leaving
but to worship as he comes and goes.

HER ROSES

Against her mouth she pressed the rose,
and there beneath the caress of lips as soft
and red as its own petals, quick the bright
 bud spread opened, and
flung its fragrance on the air.

Can it wear a young bud's
 grace again? Oh love,
regret it not! It gladly shed its soul for thee,
and though thou kiss it dead it does not murmur
 at a fate so fair. Thus once thou breathes on

me, till every germ of love and song
broke into rapturous flower and sent a
challenge upwards to the sky. What
 if swift fruition set
a term too brief to all things?
I have lived my hour and die
 contented, since for thee I die.

AT THE CONVENT

I cannot pass beyond the jealous
gate and the high walls that, rising
stern and grim like jealous guards
shut you within the dim, mysterious
space no man may penetrate.

But I can guess how the gray nuns
chide, "Late thou comes sister; still thy
lamp's to trim. Thy clear voice failed
us in the evening hymn wherewith the
grace of heaven we supplicate."

Dear, as some paltry coin a lady
might fling to appease a beggar, as you go
into your quiet cell and all is night,
tarry a moment at the casement
and throw the guerdon of your smile,
his way to light on your
poor errant minstrel down below.

TWO FIGURES

One like a creature born of brighter
spheres than these we know, a child
of joy and light, brought gladness, beauty
and love's blessed might, worship,
praise and reverence shorn of fears.

And one receiving all that most
endears soul to soul, and makes sweet the
sight of him that gives, the offering to requite,
placed in the other's hand an urn of tears.

Love veiled his brows and would
have fled, but lo there came a whisper from
the giver's breast that stayed his fluttering
wings and held him back.

"Upon my head these gathered
tears bestow a great and softening grace
it else would lack; the crown of sorrow.

Dear, thy gift is best."

SERVICE

Show me some way in which
my soul may serve thy soul and be its
nourisher. Teach me some word
to ease thy heart, soothing
thy sore and startled nerve.

Let me aspire to lend some
gracious curve to those straight lines
dividing day from day. Help me
to hold the errant feet that stray in
paths of constancy that never swerve.

Sometimes I fail to reach thee.
The ascent being so steep to where thou
dwells. In vain are my hands rich with gifts
thou can not take.

But could I see my life blood, for
thy sake to profit thee flow in a crimson
stain, dear I believe that I could die content.

COMMUNION

One cannot draw the bars against
friends and guests that crowd for entrance
at his gate. He opens inviting, nor
the simple state of his abode
against their train defends.

But there are chambers where
the lover tends his sacred fires, where no
feet penetrate save immortals where,
early and late, the breath
of prayer and sacrifice ascends.

In such a spot as this, as in the
shrine of some white temple in a dusk
made sweet with incense, far from
outer noise and heat, the hollow haste
of them that part and meet,
surrounded by dim presences divine,
my soul communes eternally with thine.

A PRAYER

Not through my merits but your grace,
immortal powers that set me free, I stand before
you face to face, and share in your eternity.

I know beyond this path so fair there
opens the dark abyss. I know that wreck
and ruin there may be the end of too much bliss.

But spare me if my humble dread appease
the Fate yourselves obey, then on my bowed but
crowned head let not your shafts descend to slay!

Your altars all I light with fires where
deepest awe and reverence meet. And garlanded
with gained desires I cling, still suppliant, to your feet.

JOACHIM

Across the strings the sympathetic
bow swept, held and guided by a master-hand.
Like the enchanted beauty long
 ago who slumbered, chained by
magic bar and band till on her lips the
 appointed prince pressed
the liberating kiss and she awoke.

So beneath the bow's long-drawn
desired caress, swift into full and perfect
being broke, freed from the violin
 the prisoned tones.

In myriad measure swelled the
melody, bewailing now with sobs and
broken moans the bondage past,
 now joyous to be free.
And as the strain began to rise and roll,
the soul of music met the artist's soul.

IN FREEDOM

I always go there and am silent.
The bird sings above and by the branches
of the spruce the friendly sun penetrates.
The flowers bloom on the meadows,
the seasons change and go.
Far in the distance like giants,
the high mountains stand.

The lovely shade lies on the earth
of the world's chest; the knowing clouds
fly in the sky and dance before desire.
Oh preserve yourself dear earth,
for you pull me to your
heart with luring gestures and
gone is all pain, gone is

suffering, as forgotten are
my hurries and hastes, bliss and joy
awake, and only peace and rest remain.

THE ROSE AND THE STATUE

The Rose said to the Statue
“Thou art cold and passionless, though
beautiful and grand. I all my life exhale,
while thou dost stand unmoved,
unmindful of the sweets I hold.”

The Statue answered to the Rose
“Thou poor, frail creature, toy and
wanton of a day, I scarce can stoop
to note thy swift decay. Lo, thou
art fading *now*, but *I* endure.”

Thus each reproached the other.
Neither thought what various means
lead to an end the same. How manifold
is beauty and what claim to the
world’s gratitude the other brought.

Oh Statue shine in majesty,
replete with high suggestions of eternal
things. Oh Rose yield up thy breath and
die, for the wings of love receive it,
and thy breath is sweet.

One must be cold and suffer.
It is earth’s blight. One must be warm
and suffer. Thus the poles touch
in a law unchanging,
but the souls of Statue
and of Rose can never unite.

THE MUSE SPEAKS

Child thine aspiring sense divines
doubtless, the voice that speaks to thee.
Arise across the tossing sea a path
of light and glory shines.

It leads unto the fields of art
whose golden harvests thou may reap,
and 'mid thy garnered treasures keep, if
humble and devout of heart.

Go dwell with gods and heroes.
Learn the lessons mighty marbles teach,
and of the laurel-crowned their
speech that through the
centuries must burn.

Then lowly kneel at Nature's feet
and from her beating bosom draw wisdom,
without whose perfect law
the best of art were incomplete.

Listen in climes of warmth and light
to the sweet-throated nightingales.
Watch till the morn's embrace prevails
the starry splendours of the night.

On shores where placid waters roll
invite the breezes of the South, till their
fleet kisses pass thy mouth,
and penetrate thine inmost soul.
Then when thy voice grows full

and strong, when all within,
without is fair, pierce with thy call the expectant
air, and wake thy lyre to Lesbian song.

PROPIITIATION

A fresh wind blows against the land,
the crested waves toss to and fro,
as swelling waves and shining sand glitter
like rifts of frozen snow. The breath
of morn lies soft and dim upon the sea.

The tender trace of pink along the
horizon's rim her lips have left
in that azure space. So on the threshold
of the morn, before the unclosing door
I wait. Will hope expire? Will joy

be born? How stands it in the
book of fate? Oh sisters three, who
hold the distaff, spin the thread,
and weave all human destiny
into a pattern bright or dread,

I ask no boon of you, for desire and
fear you know. I only bring in words
that morning hours inspire propitiatory
offering. And though no altars
rise apart where men your awful praise
rehearse, I build an altar in my heart,
and on it lay my pleading verse.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

I. Guarded by walls of roses set with thorns,
within her palace-room the princess
slept nor heard how through the wood the
loud chase swept with bay of hounds
and note of hunting-horns.

Into some dream of summer eves and morns
perchance a sudden thrill prophetic crept, as
to her side one eager hunter leapt, made strong
by love that bans and barriers scorn.

Before his tread, as at some sharp blade's
stroke a flower might fall, the deep
enchantment broke. He pressed his lips
to hers in love's long kiss, and as
her name in rapturous tone he spoke, with
happy smiling eyes the princess woke
to meet the new and unsuspected bliss.

II. Once more in slumbering state a princess
lay, while in the shadow of her palace-walls
unheeded died the glad and pleading calls,
the outer world of love and joy that sway.

But when towards evening sped her peaceful
day, despite a charm that soul and sense enthrals,
into the stillness of her perfumed halls, on
fire with love I made my venturous way.

Lo I have waked her with my ardent lips, have
seen the warm blood mantle in her cheek that

surged impetuous round my own heart's core. Yet
once again she sank in sleep's eclipse. Oh be
more powerful now that word I speak, that
touch I give! Sweet princess, sleep no more!

MY DAY WAS HAPPY, AND HAPPY MY NIGHT

My day was joyous. Happy was my night.
My people's plaudits rang whenever the lyre
of poetry I struck, my song's sweet fire has
kindled many a flame intense and bright.

My summer blossoms still, but piled
and stored within my barns have I each golden
ear of corn, and all that made the world so dear
now must I leave, leave all I so adored.

The hand falls from the harp-strings.
Shattered lie the fragments of the glass with
life replete, that gayly on my haughty
lips I pressed. Oh God how hateful-bitter
it is to die, oh God how heavenly it is to live,
how sweet is this enchanting little earthly nest!

THE CHOICE

Would I could choose the sweet and
simple way? Could I but curb the spirit's
will yearning for flight to spheres unimaginable,
heavenly bright, and in the shelter
of thy bosom stay.

Thy love is like a clear consoling ray
that from some cottage window cleaves the night,
bidding the quest to comfort, warmth and light,
which I fain would enter
did I dare delay.

But it is vain. A pearl and emerald
studded car awaits, its charioteer with streaming
curls and lustrous eyes, who beckons as
the pale earth swoons. I mount,
and the winged
steeds soar aloft, as far
from thy still home its freight the chariot whirls
beyond the limits of the suns and moons.

ENJOY YOURSELF

Hail and farewell! Thus in our brief
career the greetings follow, for our paths
unite but to diverge and those so near and
dear today tomorrow vanish out of sight.

But brave and patient heart feel no
dismay. For though they pass as it were
behind a veil, thy dear ones are not lost, but
all thy way is gladdened
with their voices crying hail!

And when thou stands on the shadowy
brink of the profound Unknown thy parting
knell shall be your psalm of love,
and thou shall sink on sleep's soft
breast, soothed by their fond farewell!

THE RIGHT GARDEN

Clad in a garb of centuries,
like solemn warders of the past, above
its secret hoards amassed stand the
funereal cypress-trees.

And each to each they nod and
wave and whisper how the king of kings
is death, and how all human things
bloom but to wither in the grave.

But down below the city lies,
near where the shining river runs within
whose breast a thousand suns are
mirrored from the cloudless
skies. In the crowded market-place, in
square and street, with gay and
fluttering flags, for all the glad

life of today pulses and surges
everywhere. Beneath the Past's almighty
shade the careless Present keeps
its cheer and though the end
is sure and near, yet we press
onward undismayed.

Verona,
December, 1878.

AFTERMATH,
J. W. Died March, 1879.

Brave Heart grown cold, did
thou not know full recognition when
the field was green in June, and
glad to yield its wealth to them
who come to mow?

And were there some who
doubted, some unwitting that perchance
thy peer moved not in
distant ranks or near, upon
whose lips thy praise grew dumb?

Such is the meed of genius,
such experience proves the frequent
fate that 'mid the small attends
the great, thy, bringing little,
sneer at much.

But the late summer comes,
when once more his scythe the reaper
sets, and for the season's store-house
gets a new sweet crop
to profit men.

So they as yet unborn shall reap
the harvest of thy steadfastness,
and thy soul's noble law, and bless
the mighty "fruits of them that sleep."

SCHUMANN'S SYMPHONY IN B FLAT MAJOR

A trumpet-call the slumbering
sense awakes, and challenges to action
and to fight. But swift the plumed line
of battle breaks, and breathing
over the brows of love alight,
the rhythm adrift with human joys
and woes, goes wandering with a question
and a sigh throughout all life's expectancy, to
die at last in notes of rapture as it rose.

The patriot Swiss who clasped
the hostile spears, and through his bleeding
breast carved freedom's way, had known
his peer on many a glorious day, had
Schumann's muse been born of
earlier years. For when such strains as these
the heart must greet, great deeds
seem easy, and to die were sweet.

RUBINSTEIN

Amid expectant silence, grave and
still he laid his hands upon the pallid keys.
Straightway the notes began to throb and
 thrill. Mirrored in sound
 were the mighty mysteries,

fathomless of human life. Its needs
and hopes, doubts, fears, fancies and
questionings appeared, and last the tramp of
 funeral steeds, those trappings of the grave.

On mighty wings uprose the
stirring chords till the great dead heard
where they wandered on the shadowy way.

Hushed for a moment was their
solemn tread, and athwart space a whisper
seemed to stray. Hail great interpreter
 of god-like men! Beneath thy
 quickening touch we live again.

CHOPIN

The polonaise is danced, the waltz
is done, the guests are gone. But still the
vague regret that breathed through
all things since the fete began,
waits and unrest and longing linger yet.

Into the night there lie repose
and peace. Hark how the wandering
voices meet and flow in rhythm.

Hear now those calm accords and
low, like dim forebodings of a swift release.

“Whom the gods love die young.”
So Chopin thou heard early, through
the harmonies that stirred thy poet brain,
the inevitable *Now* made answer,
smiling to the summoning word, and
sung to sleep on Music’s tender breast,
sank gladly into an untroubled rest.

TO R. W. E.

As sweeps a wind at morning
cool and clear, against the wavering mists
that break and flee, leaving the wide
blue prairies of the sea outstretched
in sunlit splendour far and near.

As in the early breeze's fresh embrace,
the autumn flowers shake off their sleep
and shine, gold and purple 'mid a blaze
of scarlet vine, and all the fields
are clothed with joy and grace.

So loftiest Teacher sweep thy winged
words against the mists and errors of
our days. So to thy voice respond
a thousand chords that slumbered,
thrilling to perfected praise.

And beneath the breath of thine
inspiring mood, the soul grows strong
and life seems sweet and good.

CHAUCER

A limpid source, a clear and
bubbling spring born in some wooded dell
unknown of heat, above whose breast
the leafy branches meet and kiss and
earthward wavering shadows fling,

upon whose brink the perfumed
flower-cups swing, beneath the light tread
of hurrying insect feet.

Such Chaucer seems the sturdy
note and sweet in thine unfettered song
re-echoing. Hence they who
sometimes weary of the play
of fountains and the artificial jets

which in gay parks and gardens
dance and leap, turn back again into that
forest-way where thy fresh stream the grass
and mosses wet that slumber on its
margin cool and deep.

KINGS

Read of kings and princes, how
they sought with flattering word and deed
to hold the dower their sires

bequeathed, and with new grants
of power the sufferance
of the half-freed nations bought.

How vain and foolish is their race,
I thought, who strut upon the stage their
little hour, yet like the meanest

mortal, in the flower of pride and
pomp, must perish and be
naught. Then fell the seer's words

across my page, the only king and
sovereign by God's grace is he who melts
all wills into his own.

When this one comes to claim his
heritage how we fall back
to give the monarch place, and bend
the obedient knee before his throne!

A SHATTERED GLASS

Among the curious trifles
travellers show are bits
of flashing, rainbow-tinted
glass, dropped by the hand of time,
that in the grass of seldom-trodden
fields half-hidden glow.

What cups and bowls they
fashioned who may know?

But tales they tell to new
men of past old-time feasts and
revels, and alas, of pride and
joy that perished long ago!

That was a beauteous vase
from which we drank sunshine
and smiles and love's sweet
potions, till from hands too weak
to bear its weight it sank, and
its frail rainbows shattered.

If you will let us take up
the fragments while we thank
a gracious heaven,
that these are left us still.

WEAVING

Fair-armed Helen in her
fragrant room, while the bloody
fight raged in the plain below
beyond her sight, worked at
a purple garment on the loom.

Into the web she wove pictures
of gloom and glory, deeds of prowess
and of might, labours of Greeks
and Trojans till black night
enwrapped them and they came
upon their doom.

Thus on the spreading loom
of time we weave the garment
of our life; the web we crowd
with shifting images by fate
allowed to fill from nothingness
our short reprieve, and haste the
work although so loath to leave what,
being finished, serves us for a shroud.

SURPLUS

What fullest sunshine heaven
reveals has glittered in the temple-walls
of his abode, and life on him whose
richest gifts bestowed which else
with niggard hand it most conceals.

The obstacles at which the faint
soul feels its strength gives way, were
crushed when not the goad to new
success, like pebbles on the
road scarce noticed beneath a
conqueror's chariot-wheels.

But his heart trembled, for he
wisely said, I am unworthy of this
perfect feast. Lo I bring offerings
to each jealous god, let not one
be forgot, not even the least.

If so I may escape the
avenging rod. Of states
too prosperous I am afraid.

FLORENCE

Like some fair woman on whose
breast are hung jewels of price,
so decked from side to side with
 towers and domes and
 palaces, in pride and state
she sits the circling hills among.
Into her lap the centuries have
flung their splendid spoils, and art
with art has vied to weave her
 charmed raiment, to abide
 and keep her ever beautiful
and young. And those who pass

beneath her potent sway she
welcomes nobly, and with royal mien
points where her garnered stores
 of treasure lie. Take of
 them what you will she
seems to say, here are no limits
for a queen am I, generous
 in giving as befits a queen.

ROME AFTER 1870

Mother of Nations on whose
classic brow glittered in turn the
imperial diadem, the royal fillet,
and that brighter gem with which
free men their chosen chief endow.

Today's fresh crown prints
nobler furrows now upon thy front
than left by all of them. New
pearls of promise deck thy
garment's hem and thy pulse quivers

at a people's vow. Child of these later
times yield to thy land again the
blessings it has rendered thee
last, precious conquest of a
valiant band, weary of bondage,
struggling to be free, resolved on
union be the strong right Hand,
as still thou art the Heart of Italy!

ANTINOUS OF THE VATICAN

Antinous, upon thy brow of snow
it seems as if the gathered sunshine
lay of ages, and about thy sweet lips
play the same glad smiles
that wreathed them long ago.

Thy curls' luxuriant clusters
seem to glow with the old life.
We almost hear thee say the word
thou used to murmur in that day
when love's kiss burned
on thy mouth's perfect bow.

O sweetest youth that ever
human eyes have gazed upon,
thou makes the heart grow warm
of him who lifts his glance
to thee above. And thine,
besides the charm of face and
form, his higher fame of whom the poet cries,
"how noble is his end who dies for love!"

ON LEAVING ITALY

As one who gazes on a dear
dead face, when all is over,
but cannot let it go. And with
hot tears and accents weak
with woe pleads one last reprieve
for one little space,
before the grave shall
cover all that grace which even
in death the pallid features show.

So shall we knowing that
while the stream of life must flow
no newer love this old one can
replace. I turn once more,
and yet land of my love I lingeringly
look on thee. Then sounds the
message that the further
shore cries to its messenger, the
unfeeling sea. Farewell oh Italy my Italy!

WHOM HE LOVES, HE CHASTENS

Even as the sculptor's chisel,
flake on flake, scales off the marble
till the beauty pent sleeping
within the block's imprisonment,
beneath the wounding strokes,
begins to wake.

So love which the high gods
choose to make their sharpest
instrument has shaped and bent
the stubborn spirit, till it
yields content its few and slender
graces for love's sake.

But the perfected statue proudly
rears its whiteness for the world to see
and prize, the past hurt buried in
forgetfulness, while the imperfect
nature grown more wise,
turns with its new-born
good the streaming tears of pain
undried, the chastening hand to bless.

JOYFUL POSSESSION

Into the box where he tightly
cupped my gifts also, some of the
love for him is rendered this hot prayer,
and my harp is his also.

I gate for you no longer my beautiful
treasures, and carry to you this offering,
of my mind, of silver and gold,
and these flowers of desire.

Between drops of blood my nets
of tears scintillate as diamonds. If we
do not remain and my poor heart
breaks, still will I have this celestial dream,
that for a moment you were my friend.

A WHIM

I send you flowers, my precious
one, like a monk severely tried for a
long time, this my whim for you,
and you for me. Like the perfume
of these flowers, suave and
expensive, but fleeting alas will be my
memory of you, and you for me.

When youth flees and age fast
advances can beings awaken themselves
for you, (perhaps for me also,) the thought
like a flash through this sad night,
how my heart beat one
day for you and yours for me.

Thus let us enjoy, my child.
We embrace my crumb. Before my soft
whim for you passes, and holds its for me.

IN LELA

Remote country of destiny,
this place has me, my heart turns
before you, my friend.

Here heats the sun upon
one beautiful spring, and then there
is snow, ice and cold, a sparkling
wonder, for the winter has
this responsibility, like a great king.

But not heat, neither the flowers
nor the gleaming of the sky are
as the true spring in our hearts,

Oh my friend, that regrets in the thought
that we once were beautiful. Alas, fly away.

SONG OF YESTERDAY

Where are the pinks of yesterday?
Plague, haymaker, the wind does not
spill their beautiful sheets on the ground.

Where is the love of yesterday? Died,
misunderstood, faint as a sigh lost in the air.
Where is the faith of yesterday? Fly away
on the impure wings of a too cold thin life.
Faith and love of yesterday, and you dear pinks.

Softest things, aren't they always those of yesterday?

TO ROME

City of cities! In your laughing
luminosity the sun shines on your ground
where history spans the flood
of its treasures, and brilliantly
unites the ancient glory with the present,
to the future.

City of cities! While the river
of life runs rapidly pale shadows cover
your beautiful spaces where I dwell,
though of calm and the calm one
there waits for us a familiar peace.

City of cities! You bear the
burden of every delight and despair,
in your contemplation there
is joined the rice and wedding
feast, on your heart you live impatiently
to live, oh Rome, and to die.

LIGHT LOVE

That one I gave for you?
That breath of the rose blowing to you
on the path, arousing the memory
 of one sad and discouraged
spring to your thoughts. You collect in order
 the poor little flower, and he dies.

That six you gave for me? A
warm and gentle beam from the beautiful
sun sends life in this chest
 to you the beloved of May,
while the outside world is cold. But
 falls the night.

We enjoy the warmth of the sun,
the gentle odour of the rose, but fleeting
mid the night the scent goes. You cover me
 with kisses while still love lives in you.

GOODBYE TO ROME

Hush majestic, you who part
from us feel no pain. There is but the
eternal splendour of your face,
luminous and high, which turns
toward the traveller in the final hour,
which prompts the sad heart
with a loving speech for you.

My thoughts encircle you beloved,
like the arms of one burning with ample
love for the object of their desire.

You that carry me through every
obligation, even as I leave still is there
indescribable joy which for you I feel.

Goodbye. Goodbye.

NATURE AND LOVE

Day after day I watch the fine
dividing line, scarcely discerned, 'twixt
sea and sky beneath me lie smooth shining
sands, and overhead
clear heavens outspread.

Day after day through balmy hours
I pluck the flowers from heavy-laden
shrub and tree; the fleur-de-lis, purple
and tall, and
blue-eyed grass bloom where I pass.

Often the wood-bird's clear note
rings and insect wings flit gay and glittering

down the breeze, while gold-ringed bees
drink from a fragrant flower-cup
 its sweet draughts up.

Here 'mid the scented pines
I dream until I seem a monarch in an
ancient time, a time sublime,
when earth gave all men
 frank and free, what she gives me.

But often when the restless waves
my light boat braves, a mariner destined
to explore an unknown shore am I.

All day beneath the sun,
my voyage begun, I sing glad songs
of conquering men, though silent
 when the moon her pale flame
lights above and crowned with love.

What in that word I half express
dost thou not guess? A dearer hope
than nature gives forever lives,
filling my soul. There floods my heart
 a joy apart from seas or flowers
or glowing noons, or suns or moons.

Through all the glory and the grace
I see thy face in the waves' whisper,
soft and clear thy voice I hear. Thy smile
 through every hour falls, and blesses all.

HELEN

Without the walls of Troy the
Grecian host encamped, lay spent and
weary with the fight. Eve after eve they
watched the golden light of suns
whose splendours seemed to mock them
most when most they prayed. For morn
on morn they rose to suffer fresh
defeats and bear new woes.

They could not curse because
she was so fair, the cause of all the ruin.
But the bands of heroes stretched
to heaven beseeching hands,

while wrung from lips grown
pallid with despair a cry arose
throughout the camp's domain,
re-echoing far across the barren plain,
till all the midnight air one name did bear

Helen! Helen! Helen!

Within the walls of Troy the fires
blazed bright. Song and dance were
gay and wine flowed free,
where flushed with joy and pride
and victory they held their revels
far into the night, nor paused to listen
to the warning voice that bade them
rather tremble than rejoice.

But lifting high their wine-cups
crowned with flowers, "O loveliest lady
of the land of Greece, whose bright eyes
bringing glory lead to peace,

we drink to thee through all
the happy hours," they cried, and poured
the crimson juices out, pledging her deep
and long with shout on shout till all
the midnight air one name did bear
Helen! Helen! Helen!

Our heroes on the battle-fields
within them rage the conflicts that
despair and doubt and pain, with love,
beauty and their countless train
of pleasures and of pomps forever
wage. Now Sorrow spreads her pall
and claims the fight. Now her pale
hosts surrender to delight.

But whether tossing on mad
waves of joy I drink great draughts
of rapture as of wine, or sunk beneath
a chill and bitter brine I lie prey
to every vile annoy, one image
rules each smile, controls each sigh. And
like the men of old to her I cry till
all the midnight air one name doth bear
Helen! Helen! Helen!

A DREAM OF DEATH

I died. They wrapped me in a shroud
with hollow mourning far too loud, and sighs
that were but empty sound. They laid me
low within the ground.

I felt *her* tears through all the rest,

past sheet and shroud they reach my breast.
They warmed to life the frozen clay

and I began to smile and say,
at last thou loves me, Helena!

I rose upon the dead of night. I sought
her window, it was alight. A pebble clattered
against the pane.

“Who’s there? the wind
and falling rain?”

“Ah, no. But one thy tears have
led to leave his chill, narrow bed,
to warm himself before thy breath, who
for thy sake has conquered death.

Arise and love me Helena!”

She opened the door, and drew
me in. Her mouth was pale, her cheek was
thin, her eyes were dim. Fell loosely down
her hair of gold, its length unrolled.

My presence wrought her grief’s eclipse.
She pressed her lips upon my lips. She held
me fast in her embrace, her hands went
wandering over my face, at last
thou loves me, Helena!

The days are dark, the days are cold,
and heavy lies the churchyard mould. But
ever in the deep of night, their faith the
dead and living plight.

Who would not die if certain bliss

could be foreknown? And such as this no life,
away the hour is nigh, with heart on fire she
waits my cry. Arise and love me, Helena!

FAUST AND HELENA

I. When all that life contains of rich and good
had failed to bring content to Faust there rose the form
wherein were blent all graces of all beauty's sisterhood.

Victorious Helen, young as when first wooed
by Theseus, lovely as when heroes bent their steps to
death and seas of blood were spent to win her,
fairest of all the heavenly brood.

But from his longing arms that at last embraced
this shade of beauty and were blest, she fled to pale
Persephone's domain. Oh rise again sweet spirit! Let the
past yield to the present. Here upon my breast forget
the courts that wait for thee in vain.

II. As unto Faust when all life held had failed to
bring content the Beauteous One returned, summoned
from Hades at whose sight gods burned and
goddesses with sudden envy paled.

So when the banquet of this world regaled
my spirit poorly, all for which it yearned rose in thy
presence and my eyes discerned in thine the whole
of loveliness unveiled.

But from his clasping arms the vision
fled back to the silent realms and once more left

him lone, unsatisfied and desolate. Sweet, vanish
never lest my heart bereft should consume itself
 with longing for its dead
 delight, and to despair be consecrate.

WAKING

I woke once more. The sphered ocean-spaces
lay empty and vast, behind, before, where we
must blindly trace our way from unknown shore
 to unknown shore, the moon's
 cold gleam faint with morn.

The stars had paled but chanting one incessant
theme of loss and sorrow they bewailed the fading
of my happy dream. Oh bitter sea, they cried,
 whereon he floats alone and
 joyless. Now his dream and he have
 parted, whose divine light shone
 cresting the waves of memory!

Oh envious fate whose ruthless hand
the vision tore, who robbed his bosom of the
freight so dear, so matchless, that it bore,
 and left it bare and desolate!

So swelled the song from star to star
and like a stain upon the morn rolled along
the sea the echo of the strain, ceaseless regret
 for grief and wrong.
But then my heart that strove

for courage and would hide in smiles its
smart, with words half true, half false, replied,
of man's great load each lifts his part.

And why despair?
Surely these morning clouds

shall change to evening clouds, and
they will bear fresh dreams along their fleecy
range and with new landscapes paint the air,
until the last deep sleep,
when over all the woes of love and life the
earth is cast, and, stilled in absolute repose,
dreaming and waking both are past.

AT SEA

I. What lies beyond the far horizon's rim?
Ah, could our ship but reach and anchor there what
wondrous scenes, what visions bright and fair would
meet the eyes that gazed across the brim.

But though we crowd the canvas on and
trim our barque with skill, the proud waves seem
to bear no nearer to that goal and everywhere
stretches an endless circle wide and dim.

So do we dream, treading the narrow path
of life between the bounds of day and night.
Tomorrow turns this page so often conned. But
when tomorrow comes it hath the limits
of today, and in its light still lies far off
the unknown heaven beyond.

II. We sail the centre of a ceaseless round,
forever circled by the horizon's rim. And fondly
deem that from that far-off brim some sign will rise
or some glad tidings sound.

But no word comes to break the bound
of sea and sky all day with distance dim, and
vanished quite when darkness, chill and grim,
about the deep her sable shroud has wound.
So on the seas of life and time we drift
within the circling limits of our fate, expectant
ever of some solving breath. But no sound comes,
no pitying hand lifts the veil nor faith
nor love can penetrate, and to our dusk
succeeds the dark of death.

TO ROME

I. In a Garden of Armida flows a stream
of sweet oblivion, where the roar and din
of far-off fights is heard no more, where
for all wounds some healing balsam grows.

It is a dream in which no dread of waking
throws its darkling shadow over the fancy's store,
but where the radiant-fingered hours outpour
long draughts of rest, refreshment, and repose.

Both these, a vision, an enchanted space,
city of cities when the eyes have seen thy deeper
mysteries, does thou appear. Fain would the heart,
in homage to thy grace and grandeur cry
that the wide world might hear, hail

mighty Rome, my mistress and my queen!

II. Like an overwhelming wind that sweeps
along the path on which glad bands of pilgrims come,
lashing their limbs till they grow stiff and numb,
smiting their lips and robbing them of song.

So do thy mighty shadows move among
the daily shows, upon their fronts the sum and story
of the Past, and speech is dumb, and dead desire
before that wondrous throng.

What should he prate whose ear is strained
to catch their voiceless accents? How torment
the heart with thoughts aside from their imperious
sway? Back every crowding image, while we
watch the spirits' progress and even thou
depart, oh love unanswered. This is not thy day.

III. As in the presence of the loved one fly,
for him who loves, the golden-winged hours, so
'mid the circle of thy charm, with showers
of gifts and benisons the days go by.

And as his mistress still the lover's eye
invests with new-found beauties, so fresh flowers
upon thy bounteous lap the lavish Powers seem
to our dazzled sight to multiply.

And one divinely-drunken spirit nods
above the cup thou bears, crying, it's fraught
with joy. Drink deep while the wine overflows.
But one more wise a warning word bestows.

Heart, let thy bliss be tempered by the thought

that excess of rapture pleases not the gods.

WONDER

To E. B.

It is a wonder when day breaks from
those portals of the night, and with her joyous
smile and bright crowns the high hills where
darkness lay, flooding the outstretching plains
with light. A wonder when the bud
perceives how tight its petals press, growing
impatient of control, until she throws, nourished
by dews of morn and eves wide in the air
the perfect rose.

Or when the gilded butterfly wakes
from the sleep in which were furled the joyous
wings about him curled and breaks the shell
and floating high goes on his glad way
throughout the world.

But greater marvels than these are
such as harbor in the soul, like words within
some fast-sealed scroll, concealing close what
mysteries? Then strikes the hour
and they unroll when eyes once
cold that looked askance kindle at ours, and
send a ray of warmth and cheer along our way,
and with their deep, tender glance herald
the dawn of love's new day.

When lips we never thought to taste
thrill beneath our own, when fond arms reach

about us, when quick heart-beats teach how
burns the breast we hold embraced.

Then are love's signs more eloquent
than speech.

And when these things are should
we not lift the heart to heaven with thankful
prayer that, working wonders everywhere,
it wrought for us this gracious gift,

than which no other is more fair?

Dear, while I whisper bend thy cheek
a little nearer, where my strong deep praise
and sweet new joy belong. Thou knows the sense
of what I speak, the happy secret of my song.

FOUNTAINS IN ROME

Before St. Peter's, like wreaths of
spotless snow over the bare, sad earth the
pitying winter breathes, as proud jets
 flash into the air. But where the water
breaks and falls and meets the sun,
with every gem it glows wherewith
 shall deck her walls one day
 the new Jerusalem.

While here beside a mighty pile where
spoils of splendid ages gleam, the Triton
with an endless smile uplifts to heaven
 his slender stream. And there Bernini's
grotesque taste with nymphs and gods
the square adorns, and giants grouped
 in circles placed wide basins

from their horns.

Here Trevi, whose enchanted pool,
when hearts with parting anguish burn,
will yield in draughts divinely cool

consoling promise of return. And
here come the doves to bathe and drink
and seek for shade amid noon's glare

beneath the fountain's brink, or
'mid the mermen's clustering hair.

But these, the body's thirst that slake,
that pour in many a loved retreat their fresh
and limpid floods, that make the beauty

of a Roman street, seem but the images
of those deep sources 'mid the city's span,
that in their hoary breasts enclose

the wondrous history of man.

Rome, of these fountains of thy lore
let my soul but drink. Not all in vain be
opened for me thy matchless store,

nor closed without return again.

Let some sweet stream of tuneful praise
towards thy clear heaven its voice uplift,

along whose flow shall shine and blaze
the gracious rainbow of thy gift.

FROM NAPLES TO ROME

The sun set. The wide Campagna
stretched about us like a sea. Miles on miles
of billowy distance scarce a limit seemed

to be to the great immensity.

Till upon the far horizon, through
the mist the hills rose higher, and upon
three tallest summits, shooting like
a golden spire, heavenwards
blazed like a beacon fire.

And we knew that in the evening
stillness, where the eternal dome rises over
tower and palace lay our long-desired home,
 lay the great enchantress, Rome.

Watch-fires kindled by the ages
where the passing moments pour all the
present's shifting fuel on the accumulated store,
 till the pile glows more and more,
 to the grand and wondrous

precincts of her hoary walls invite.
And with longing for the morning to reveal them
to our sight, grateful hearts thanked God that night.

IN MEMORIAM B. H. C. (At Sorrento)

I. The summer strews with lavish
hand her gems upon this Southern shore,
with gold and emeralds glows the land,
 and sapphires from the ocean's floor.

The sun a glittering ruby gleams, each
star a topaz, while the mist that over the
mountain summits streams is set with
 many an amethyst.

Unto the evening's gates of pearl
there leads an opal-paved way, and pearly
are the clouds that curl about the bosom
of the day. But oft upon the radiant
scene thy image of my friend
appears, and all the jewels that have
been are changed to diamonds in my tears.

II. With flowers and lights the altars
blazed, the white-robed priests, with
crosses raised and banners fluttering
onward came, 'mid many a candle's
flickering flame. The gentle dusk
its mantle wrapped about the landscape
quiet lapped the land, until the pious throng
uplifted a thanksgiving song.

Then held on high, that over all
with equal light its rays might fall, and
equal grace to all afford was borne
the body of our Lord. And at its sight,
upon their knees the people fell
as when a breeze sweeps over the summer
earth at morn, bowing a field of uncut corn.

Why should thy spirit seem to shine
here, where a creed so unlike thine lavished
the treasures of its art, and through
the senses touched the heart?
I know not, but as with the rest
I knelt, thy memory dear and blest, a living
presence seemed to be, and sacred grew

the hour to me.

ON THE PINCIAN

Their dusky boughs the pine-trees
lift against the heaven's transcendent hue,
nor does the faintest cloudlet drift one film
 across the perfect blue.

The world lies bathed in sunshine.
Hill and hollow, fountain and circling stream
sparkle with light, and hushed and
 still the city, like a dream.

So smiles the Present, while the Past,
mysterious and dim about it lies, guarding
the kingdoms wide and vast, invisible
 to human eyes. But
whispering to human ears with speech
more potent than our own, the story
of the by-gone years, in low, perpetual tone.

It tells how soon the race was for
others over, how we soon shall be with kings
and emperors gone before but shadows
 of reality. And how
we pass that they may come whom
time's swift courses bear along, how other
lips when ours are dumb, shall
 blossom into song,

as now we sing beside their graves
whose rhythmic laughter once made glad
the earth, whose gentle memory

craves from us more
tender words than sad, and as today
over quick and dead
extends the sky's unsullied space.

So ever over us shall spread the
infinite embrace that change is not, that
destiny rules with a calm, impartial sway,
that to all eyes is given
to see the generous beauty of the day.
And last sweet comfort unto men,

the thought an armor against despair,
since this world is so blest, shall then a future
be less fair? With
thoughts like these of peace
and rest amid the noon's effulgent light, has
soothed, not terrified the breast, with shadows
of the coming night. And here within
the soul's true home
beneath thy calm and tranquil sky,
while making life all joy oh Rome, thou teaches
how to die.

Part II.

The Poems of
Lady Daibu

THE SORROWS OF DAIBU
(Poetess of the Taira-Minamoto War.)

I. The miseries I have seen.

What wretched fate is mine . . .

I still go on living!

What kinds of thoughts?

Beneath the moon I.

Wet my sleeve with tears?

Am I to end my days . . .

These black longings unfulfilled?

Battered by tumult of waves?

Not even a single
untroubled hour.

II. I hear greater wretchedness.

I might leave behind.

This world its miseries.

No desire to continue. Longer in this
world. *I do not die.*

To have survived another day?

These blossoms also grieve.

I loved so well.

III. Long ago we used to . . .

Morning and night, morning . . .

That he would come to this!

He suffered a dreadful change.

Passes the wretched days.

His face and form. Beauty compared
to spring. Ebbing away

beneath empty waves.

The sea by Holy Kumano.

He cast himself forever.
Try gathering like seaweed.
Tangled strands of my thoughts.
Drifting in his sea-stained hair.

IV. The present world the same.
As the one before. Though it holds
no place for me.
These fresh anxieties, what?
What do they bring?
Plunge me in deeper grief.
Shut off my thoughts.
Cut myself from past.
Yet. Longings, memories flooding
back. After all, after all.
No more can notice. Love others
hold for me.
No more *should* notice.
I can't, I can't . . .

V. Holds no place for me.
I am held fast. This misery be
mine. Ordinary bereavements
are pitiable. Can they
know such nightmares?
Summer cicadas screaming,
sighing. Keening minglest with
mine. Do you too grieve?

VI. My body wanders forth,
unthinking, following my heart . . .
Memories keep me here.
Dew has vanished. This garden

falls ruined. Like he fell
ruined. A wild heath bearing.
No trace its former beauty.

VII. Tears fall like dew. I survive
until spring. I come again, alone.
Yet nothing is certain.

Who has suffered as I?
Is this a dream? Was our past dream?
I am at a loss.
This is reality?
Moon above the clouds. Resting
on this mountain. Even her radiance
touched with sadness.
Our tears fall like dew.

VIII. My sojourn in worlds.
The road of my return.
Lies ever open before me.
To follow at my will.
Yet beginnings of journeys.
Are always profoundly moving.
Remember one
reluctantly leaving.
How much greater her sorrows.
I will be a fugitive dwelling. Who
vanished like melting snows.

IX. Does the fragrance still linger?
Of those sleeves of long ago?
World of old never comes.
Not again, they say.
Making events long passed. Grow all

the more affecting.

Lost in thought I. My spirit floating
aimlessly. I gaze the sky. In all directions
without end. Clouds stretch on, on . . .

X. It is upon the moon that so often
I have gazed enraptured . . . I have come
to understand . . . last profound beauty
of a starlit sky . . . no way to melt my
ice frozen tear-stained sleeves . . .
no memories remain for me . . .
by the sea of Omi were I able to meet
my love, one whom I long for,
gladly would I spend lifetimes
mingling with these wild waves.

Part III.

The Poems of Eric
Mackay Yeoman

ROSALIE (From Eric Mackay
Yeoman, 1885-1909.)

I. Rude monuments chaos, amethyst snowy
streams, foaming liquors roar to gaping
caverns, pour to verdant
plains. In pearly mist.

This is my universe and
my frail heart its centre.

Ghostly morn-mists
flee chartless, pursuing wraiths of reality,
a luring void.

Kingdoms of wan flowers
against creeping shadows' stealth.
Violet hues burst. Violent gold chased lost
forms. Cold-plundered Earth.

II. Winged things' harmonies, haunts
of stately wold. Simple heaven descends.
I commune with miseries.

Spring's straying sickens me, my
senses to a narcotic chaos. Despair.

A withered thing
by sorrow's frost.

III. From bright palaces beyond, quiet
splendour spread. Far from stations in
dusky sky.

A seraph band of friends she lost.

Mourned.

Snowy angels haunt
crimson halls, lingering
from their lands
of long delight. Rapturing the world
entrancing flowers.

Sprang like lips all ruby-dye.

IV. Fade. So, fade wan flowers in dusk cold
shades. The world was fair in perished hours.
Some were stolen by angels gathering
for their paradise.

Some we nourished.
No more to shine upon
our voided eyes. Faint
frail flowers are night-wind's prey. Grace rich
bournes. All your soft delight.

V. Warlike glory gleams, last red embers die.
A mist lies on twilight seas.
Bridge of dreams comes visions.

We see joy of other days. Sorrows
are past. Shapes out the best, at last.

Wandered sadly by
a shadowed sea. Darkness triumphed.
Soul was kinsman to sleeping night.

VI. Painted flower seas. Lakes like mirrors.
Wandered where beauty lies. Did angels

hear moaning of the skies? Troubled
spheres. Flickering planets flare
and dying suns emit their pallid glare.

Mists enshroud, mock.
Rumbling space forth-vomits. Worlds that
blare. Roar stagnant gulfs. Shrieking
whirlwinds their hideous flight.

VII. Bursting suns impel their crystal blaze
and snowy flames into cosmic
haze above zones

where painting lightning cast
gorgeous flames in vast displays
beyond where young
suns hold their sways, while worlds swirl
round. Drink of virgin light.

VIII. Eyes are closed to Earth's harsh tragedy.
Cold-plundered Earth. Violent gold chased
lost forms. Violet hues burst.

Kingdoms of wan flowers
against creeping shadows'
stealth. Ghostly morn-mists
flee chartless, pursuing
wraiths of reality, a luring void. This is my
universe and my frail heart its centre.

In pearly mist.

Rude monuments chaos, amethyst snowy

streams, foaming liquors roar to gaping
caverns, pour to verdant plains.

Fate called child away, and she gone
into peopled skies, home with her spirit's kin
 kept hidden from her trustful eyes.
Eyes are closed to Earth's harsh tragedy.
 And mine.

Part IV.

The Poems of
Connie Dykeman

LIFE

Don't think of life as a long golden road with never a hill or a bend or never a stone on which to stumble or never a rut to mend.

Or with beautiful shade trees arched overhead flawless and straight and tall and with joyous sunbeams shining to gleam on a jewelled wall.

Or just a place where cares are unknown and toil is trampled for pleasure and your thoughts are free for you alone and actions are measure for measure.

For there are many and many a hill to climb and many a bend to take and stumbles you'll never be able to count though many amends you'll make.

And many a tree will fall across the path you have sought to trod but push along as best you may and see the hand of God.

And along the road, there'll be no wall to keep the way straight for you but many and many a break there'll be other roads to be trodden too.

And you'll find there are many tasks to be done though weary you may be but look ahead with courage stout and true and this is what you'll see.

On a glorious portal of

precious gold written in letters the best
**"I forgive your mistakes, come unto
me, and I will give you rest."**

REMEMBRANCE

Those brave boys sailed across the
ocean blue
only to meet another ocean, red;
left their warm places of repose
to rest forever in an earthen bed.

They left their mothers for a fighting
thrill
to save their country with no
thought of death,
fighting so bravely until they
wounded fell,
a prayer for mother and a farewell
breath.

Every night beside the empty cot
mother was praying for her pride
and joy.

Would he return? or was he then at
rest?

May Mother meet in heaven with
her boy.

Knowing not where their young
young bodies rest,
flowers are laid beside the
monument

given by everybody, young and old,
but the most beautiful are those
which mother sent.

THE ANTLERED MONARCH

The antlered monarch softly
moves towards the woodland
pool, his thirst to quench,

but little does he think or
knows that very soon his blood
will drench the verdant moss
about his hooves.

After careful aim at that hand
some head a loud report rings
through the wood,

the noble brute lies on the self
same spot where a moment
before he so gracefully stood.

The antlered
monarch is sorely dead.

TO A MOTH

Escape rare bird of night where
yet you may, escape 'ere comes
the glaring

light of day
when greedy seeker ever long
to find a moth whose beauty

is akin to thine. Oh, piece of
gossamer, gold, black and white
fly safely by Diana's mellow light.

KILLING

If people kill the animals
just for the sport of killing
some humans should be
butchered off,
if the government is willing.

Part V.
The Poems of
cgnastrand

THE BLACK JUNGLES

Black jungles glisten. On crimson
world. Gardens of scarlet. For
 scarlet kings. On thrones
scarlet diseased. Single grey shadow
of bronze. Unseen by them.

 Wasp-like iridescent kings.
Watching as the sky bleeds.
And world dissolves away. Spider
webs glisten. The prey released.

 Suddenly all have wings.
Gardens are empty. Childhood has
ended. Stars but glisten.

Worlds but sing. Kings become
 chrysalis. Awakened in
birth. Scatter themselves forever.
Leave their children. Far
 behind them. Amid black
gardens. Imprisoned as amber.
Imprisons a wasp. As all begins anew.
Creation revolves about. Itself again.

THE PEOPLE (Inspired by the
writings of Georg Heym.)

Great fires they sweep into night.
Suicides walk abroad these times.
The streets are littered with corpses
 like broken moths.

Night holds
her dominion
dying here.

The people
watch the ships rotting along the
ocean's road. They stop. They stare.

They do not scream.
The city roars like a beast in heat.
Aslant the shadows watch as
 we make love.

Upon the
great ocean
of thorns

the hordes of
suicides recline, lusting after wounds
that will not heal. The selves now
 lost they will not come
again. The dead awake and pluck
from their eyes a leaden sleep, of the
 dreams they had
when they were alive.

THRAGO

Like all villains it is
the flair of genius which
liberates him.

It is not enough
to murder the prince
in his bed but to lay upon
the dead man's body
and kiss him tenderly
in death, to leave
a lasting impression
upon his spirit.

It is not enough to
rape a woman but to blind
her and take away her tongue
and hands and feet,
and leave her in a place
where not even the beasts
will have pity.

EMBRACE THE WILLOW

Embrace the willow tracing
her hands along the ground and lays
her breasts along the river's
lips, to suckle and be suckled on.

Embrace the fears that cling
and trace their lines along your mouth,
they too shall pass as you
feast upon your fears and devour them
to unbeing, by the willow and her
lustful river son, shaded by her
over-ripened breasts.

MY PROSTITUTE

I have a prostitute I like.
Her dinner conversation
fascinates me, her discussions
on Zuk and Nietzsche reveal
a well-trained mind,
perhaps a lawyer in a previous life.

I come just to sit
and hear her talk. I've drawn her
picture in my heart. I know of men
who spit in the face of art.

SAND

I. The mountain's mouth is
quietly cold. Inside lay white
sand and shriveled soldiers
lie. What cruel flower there follows
black wasps decayed?
Under what savoured sky?

II. My enemy I buried upon
the isle. In the land of her fathers
I placed her,
 as a lover would.
What greater gift to she who
made me then place her lovingly
in her father's tomb
and lay her who made me gently
down by the mountain's
mouth beside cruel flowers
 where the black wasps
decayed, though she is my hated
enemy, as a lover would?

A DARK KING

*He would sooner
the grass has his wealth
than*

*his sons live their
lives in his shadow.*

In court, a dark king sits and
with his eyes regards each
shadow as it flits like ghosts
across the floor.

With voice outstretched he calls
each by name before cursing
them with an executioner's voice.

In this court which the sun will
never see only a dark king recalls
echoes of them who
walked like gods once proud
then afraid, rendered now to ghosts
in a court of dead names.

ST. ROSALIA

I left her roses once,
wondering why.

I thought about her, Rosalia,
empty thoughts in empty rooms,
wasteful really.

You can't buy women
with roses, and I have no love
to bribe them with. I have no love at all.

AMOROUS

Amorous green centaur,
oak-skinned, slowly turning
into sand, into shoreline.

He becomes the body of a
beach, still green, each
grain emerald, and one

hears the thunder of his steps
upon himself, while the sky
hangs above, herself impotent
to his will.

MEDUSA IN LOVE

Medusa's hair is softly red,
crimson black like tallowed wicks
of candles,
blood dark with absinthe

or opium's skin leaving 'pon
all who gaze at her
a little delirium poured
upon them, until drunk of eyes
or senses dulled they

grow to statues but not
of stone; languid they lie
unmoving from
the spot where they were touched
by a goddess walking with

the shadows in her step.

MEDUSA CUTS HER SERPENT HAIR

Medusa cuts her serpent hair
and with an acid peels away
the scales from off her face

till she looks like any woman I
have seen, trying so desperately
to be what she can never be,

lovely and beautiful even with
her scales and her serpent hair.

AUTUMN

I imagined one cold night
the country of autumn was
same as the country of steel,
 trees hardened as girders,
leaves cut deep as
wires on flesh,
 and sometimes,
sometimes, dead machines
screamed in the middle
of the night like living men.

SMALL BLACK WOMB

Life is a small black
womb, like a man in a little
glass jar in a little glass jar.

Life is a door like a war
at Willow's Square,
each murdered there
standing still not knowing
why they stand.

Such are lives
condemned upon the air
by the princes of sleep,
we the prisoners
of two worlds.

HADES

On the dead world, I was the last
of men, by pillars of stone left by my kin,
before the end.

Only Hades was with me, only the
ghost of the god who is dead waiting with me until
the time when I would be taken
to see all those he had carried before
and after all that,
after the end, he'd fade away
like other men, with no task to save him or thought
to redeem him. From death he had life
and with death he will end.

BASILISK

Spiderlings, silver threads dangling
like an inverted cathedral in miniature
from out my giant's hand.

Of me

what do they think of, those glass-bodied
children of an absent mother? To them

I am a basilisk, I would turn

their glass bodies to stone, rupture
them as scales along cement, break their
jewel eyes into jagged spires of bone.

If they think

of me at all they might
think of me as that, or perhaps nothing
but the ground they walk and crawl upon,

with the sun a lamp overhead,
and night nothing but me turning off the
lamp, and finally going indoors.

IN MOUNTAINS

In mountains, in rivers resting
silently there

 lay the land of the
one night stand.

Each man is like the moon
with two faces, one side
always being shown.

 The hawk and the jaguar
are there where
I was born in the red grass again.

THE BOTTLE DRAGON

Snake god's requiem, the bottle dragon
lying there like a tear cut across
a drunk's sad lips and it seems

 as if the serpent god is also drunk
a little bit, lying down
with the bottle dragon coming near

 until he can't escape the blood-drenched
tear his own self he makes into.

ELECTRIC BABYLON

Hoping for more, expecting less
electric Babylon reclines on the Serpent Nile
where twisted minds have a twisted rest

and hanging gardens bear the weight
of gods they've made out of deserted subway
stations, graffiti and the silence it brings,

out of the godless summer queen
and the puritanical winter king crucified
for looking on her loveliness as electric

Babylon moans a little between its
sighs, for between a woman's sweating thighs
hell and heaven come together, hell and heaven
are everywhere on the Serpent Nile.

THE PERSONIFICATION OF SAND

The personification of sand loved unwisely
and unwell, the living doll some kind of angel
with the old woman in the woods,
the sibyl spreads beneath, the charbaby burns.

THE WHORE-FROST

We are shades and shadows,
the whore-frost our mother;

between sweating thighs
we hold communion in
graces she brings, as moans
become our hymns,
our native tongue,

oh, mother of all sins we
reach to you to come to us
at last;

there is a burial
innocence in the cold
a shadow feels, a hunger
untouched which clothes
a naked shade.

We love you as we come for
you. Reach out to us, come for us.
Communion awaits.

Part VI.

The Poems of
Gadianton

ULEXITE

Ulexite

 clear
eyes, yours,
hers,
soft as vinegar,
quick as sand,
 me
between, hunted
gaze, haunted,
yourselves
archers.

ACACALLIS

Sister of

 a minotaur,
her name was.
Find in burial plots
women like her,
 with brothers
too cursed to stain earth
by being laid rest,
 instead their
graves unfound are.
Only record of them
 are the loved ones
whose lives the worst of
 were.

THE REMARKABLE LIFE OF EDGAR PEACOCK

Find in old death notices
lives caught 'tween embryo
and breathing.

Here is one. Edgar
Peacock, stillborn. Can't
tell who he might have been.

Imagine all the places
and days allotted him,
extinguished.

There are more lives unsaid
than all the grains of stars
burning, grinding in the dark.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ELIZA SELDOM

Old dead leaves
stain in passing.

Decade is not time,
it is country.

What she saw, who
she was, can a year tell,
can years give witness?

Every old person
looks the same to
everyone younger
than themselves.

MALCOLM FIVEFIELD FRIARS

He took wing
one day in spring before
the ravens feasted,
and tasting mead
and honeyseed
Friars rested,
beside the grave
his children made
of all that he had left them.

MOTH SONG

She is a moth
that never sings
since she has no tongue
nor voice but in my dreams
she can, just as in my
dreams the one I love
loves me.

AB KIN XOX

Lord of verse,
lord of words,
invoked in body of
hummingbird,
flashing scarlet
as a sword, who has not
heard, who has he not
heard?

THE BALLAD OF CHYARA BYARD

Chyara Byard slender as a
twig in November,
green as summer is
remembered, not human child,
alraune perhaps,
 seed of mandrake blood
and hanged man's seed.

You'd find her seducing
boys and men who'd never
come back, taken by elegant
hand to the forest where
ever leaf is her, every twig
her fingers.

Every root is her eye.
Delicate duelist with blade
of thorn met her end in fire
and storm

 when the forest burnt
down from the thunder sound
and she was torched miles
from there,

 in sympathy with
the ground of her burial birth.

Part VII.

The Poems of
Kanada Hito Karasu

HAIKU OF A KANADA
HITO KARASU

1) Spider on thread
silver descends, homages
corpses made of lead.

2) Wolf's own shadow
knows not colour of
wolf's own skin.

3) Sunlight pours
against face of the rose
as she is cut and bled,
laid to rest upon
small child's hand.

4) In the crowd
your face; mist
on raindrops.

5) Then she is one,
she is lonely
and done of life
retreats; stone.

6) Blue spider road
and all loaded
down toad and frog
slowed; spider
fed.

7) Snow on poplars
and when far from
you, stars are dead.

8) Cigar smoke and
one bleak land of
broken-handed trees.

9) Never does the hound betray
the pack of foxes.

10) The sickle strikes
the wheat
and an ant is slain.

11) The bones of the grass
are set
till the wind cries.

12) A leaf owes no allegiance
to the man who frees it
from the branch.

13) A frog swallows the moon
reflected in a pond of water.

14) A stone tortoise
falls into a garden pool.
Only his owner complains.

15) Single pebble stumbles
from hills, leads in ranks his
brothers to the valley.

16) A child reaches
for the bright flower,
a scorpion's tail.

17) In the box
a shadow hides
an unlit candle.

18) The cricket drinks at
the tea before the fool
throws out the cup.

19) The girl unrobes
herself amid the crowd
of snowdrops.

20) In the cup of a friend
a cricket doesn't notice
if the tea is good.

21) Twilight and the grasses
all become small children's hands.

22) To love a wolf
is not to go unarmed.

23) Jealous he watches
even his wife's reflection
suspiciously.

24) How sad when the worm
is caught
and the sparrow is still hungry.

25) The horse to
battle pants
and on the field rests.

26) Drunk on life's pleasures
girl forgets snow clinging
about her naked feet

27) The violet shakes her
head at me scornfully
as I paint her.

28) Carved on the bones
of a bear, I wrote
one poem upon another.

29) The piper plays his softest tune
and still, the ravens glisten on the grass.

30) The wall leans
lazily against the
cloud of ashes.

31) Dog at mute
attention, sparrow
on the grass.

32) Toad bloated,
oak splintered, winter
bled to spring.

33) A crime has been committed
on the fly; my child's hands are stained
with ice-coloured wings.

34) Butterfly do
not leave, go with
me, go with me;
know my love.

35) Ripen in the
sun, so she said
or he said to
her; lonely.

36) Little child go
with me, do not
follow laughter,
or black snow.

37) I have conquered the sun
from shining! I have plucked
out my eyes!

38) I am the sea; light
pours down my back; sun
roars in my face.

39) Penning drunken lines
with hot milkweed wine
the poet forgets the sky
so let us escape you
and I. Who will care
if we are gone?

40) Epilogue: The Last City

I walked in the last city of man
and found no tears of joy stained
our souls or eyes.

I left the last city of man bitterly
for all the men were shadows
there and all the women shades.

*In last city of man
lay delicate things:*

*black rose petals
scattered 'pon*

*crumbling crystal
books of the dying.*